

# MUSICAL NOTES AND COMMENT



## OPERATIC HISTORY IN SONNECK'S WORK

Chief of Music Division of  
Congress Library Delves  
Into Libretto Archives  
in Writing of Vast  
Collection.

By H. E. KREHBIEL.

It was a fortunate day for the students of musical history when the Librarian of Congress, Mr. Herbert Putnam, appointed Mr. O. G. Sonneck chief of the division of music in that institution. Mr. Sonneck, though native born, is not troubled with the common American failing of restlessness and flippancy, but possesses instead an enthusiastic love for investigation, coupled with an extraordinary capacity for work and a marvellous amount of patience. Were he among the Germans, from whom he is descended, he would be admired because of his abundant *Sitzfleisch*, as they call it—a property more common among the savants of Germany than among the students of any other nation. The fruit of his knowledge and industry has become known through a number of historical monographs on early American music, which he has published at his own expense, and it is a matter for general gratification that his name promises to appear at intervals now above the imprint on the title pages of government reports. It appears thus, and at the end of a characteristically erudite preface of a truly monumental "Catalogue of Opera Librettos Printed Before 1900," which has just been issued. The work is in two volumes, the first of which, containing 1,172 pages, is devoted to titles, with notes, the second, of 469 pages, comprising an Author List, Composer List and Aria Index.

### REMARKABLE GROWTH OF THE COLLECTION.

Those who are interested in such things know the work of the musical division of the Library of Congress under the administration of Mr. Putnam and Mr. Sonneck. Ten years ago the library, in addition to a large number of theoretical and historical works, contained 700 full operatic scores; now it houses 2,500 such scores, besides 7,000 so-called vocal scores—that is, the voice parts, with the orchestral parts arranged for pianoforte. More remarkable than these items, however, is the fact that its collection of opera librettos now numbers 17,000, and it is to these that the five volumes issued from the Government Printing Office are devoted.

The collection is based upon that made by a German music dealer, Albert Schatz, of Rostock, Germany, which was purchased for the library at the instance of Mr. Sonneck in the fall of 1908. In itself this was one of the most famous collections in the world, and it has been largely augmented by purchase and by deposits for copyright purposes. Schatz devoted forty years to its accumulation, and when it came into the hands of the United States government it filled thirty-six volumes, accompanied by a neatly written "Hand-Katalog," which was extremely helpful to Mr. Sonneck in preparing his volumes. Schatz was a merchant in Hamburg, who came to the United States about 1866 and spent seven years in mercantile pursuits in San Francisco. In 1873 he went to Rostock and became proprietor of a music shop. Always interested in the subject, he conceived the idea of writing a history of the opera, and becoming dissatisfied, as every real student must, with the inadequacy of the material at hand, especially with the everlasting paraphrasing by one writer of what a predecessor had written, he determined to gather original material on his own account. He collected librettos and historical memoranda until his classified list contained no less than 80,000 titles, recording the titles of operas, names of composers and librettists, place and date of original performance, and first repetitions in other cities. Reaching his seventieth year, he realized the impossibility of carrying out his purpose to write a history of opera, so he abandoned it and decided to sell his collection of librettos, which number 12,340, the odd hundreds representing cantatas and oratorios.



OSCAR G. SONNECK,  
CHIEF OF THE DIVISION  
OF MUSIC,  
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

man "play with music," entitled "Pocahontas," printed in Jamestown, Va., in 1874, and the same year in Ansbach, Germany. Schatz names a Johann Wilhelm Rose as the author of the work, but did not learn who wrote the music. Sonneck quotes in German the following remarks from the preface: "This play has lain longer than Horace demanded in the desk of the author, who wrote it thirteen years ago to please a friend. That the savage maiden speaks wittily with surprise no one who knows from Captain Smith's travel, that wit was a

when it purchased the Longe collection of minor English dramatists, individual purchases and deposits for copyright, is of course incomplete. But no one familiar with the subject can ever hope to see a half-way complete collection, even if all the collectors and librarians in the world were to unite their treasures. After buying the Schatz collection, the Library of Congress (meaning the indefatigable Sonneck, encouraged by Mr. Putnam) entered upon the task of filling in as many gaps as possible, paying particular attention to works of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, rather than of the nineteenth, since a catalogue of the earlier works was more practicable and more likely to precede one devoted to the later—a catalogue which will no doubt be issued some day, though nothing is said of this in Mr. Sonneck's preface.

Mr. Sonneck frankly points out the weak spots in the collection as it now exists. Herr Schatz was less zealous in the collection of French librettos than in German and Italian, and paid little attention to Bohemian, Spanish, English and American productions. The Longe collection, already mentioned in the case of English operas, but the American list is woefully small. It must be remembered, however, that the time limit is the end of the eighteenth century. There will be a better accounting when the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are reached. Opera in America, as we have had frequent occasions to remind careless and uninformed enthusiasts, is much older than they think. Traces of it have been found in the early decades of the eighteenth century, and the English type of opera was industriously cultivated in the colonies and states from 1749 to 1825, when Italian opera came to compete with it. It will be found profitable as well as interesting to review the titles referring to them in Mr. Sonneck's catalogue. Considerable might be written about the use of American subjects by foreign librettists and composers. Some titles indicate the character of these musical plays: "The American Indian," "L'Americano," "L'Americano" (an Italian ballet), "L'Americano" (set by Piccini), "The Cherokee" (set by Stephen Storace), "Columbus; or a World Discovered," "The Fair American" (for which Thomas Carter wrote the music and which was produced at Drury Lane, London, on May 18, 1783), "La Famille Americaine," words by "Citoyen Bouilly" (who wrote the French libretto on which "Fidelio" is based), music by "Citoyen Dalayrac"; "Le Huron," "Gill Indigee in America" (a ballet). None of these titles, however, pique curiosity as much as does a German

prominent trait in the character of the women of Virginia."

Here are some notes on operas the books of which were reprinted in America on the occasions of their performance here:

"The Dead Alive; or, The Double Funeral." A comic opera in two acts, with additions and alterations. As performed by the Old American Company in New York with universal applause. By John O'Keefe. New York, printed by Hodge, Allen & Campbell, 1789. (This is a reprint of the libretto of an opera for which Samuel Arnold wrote the music, which was originally produced at the Haymarket, London, on September 24, 1759. The performance here before the end of the year shows how close the theatres of London and New York were at the time.)

"The Deserter," a comic opera in two acts, as performed at the Theatre, New York, with universal applause. By Mr. C. Dibdin. New York, Samuel Campbell, 1797. (This was the English version of Monsigny's "Le Déserteur," which had its first American representation on June 8, 1787. In London Monsigny's authorship was recorded and it was noted that there was additional music by Philidor and Dibdin. New Yorkers were left to imagine that all the music came from Dibdin.)

"The Lord of the Manor," a comic opera in three acts, as performed with universal applause by the American Company, Philadelphia, H. Taylor, 1791. (An earlier edition, as was pointed out at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, was printed by William Spotswood in 1790. The date of the first American performance has not been discovered.)

"Love in a Village," a comic opera written by Mr. Bickerstaff, as performed at the New Theatre in Philadelphia. (This opera, a great favorite in its day, was a pastiche, its music being drawn from the works of a dozen composers, among them Arne, Boyce, Carey (who wrote "God Save the King"), Galuppi, Geminiani, Gardine, Handel and Larry Griegan. Who in the name of St. Patrick was Larry Griegan?)

A taboo rested on the drama and opera (then more closely connected than they are now) in Boston for a long time after these forms of entertainment were popular in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Richmond, Charleston and other cities, but even Boston is represented among the reprints of English librettos. We note "The Spoil'd Child. A farce in two acts, as performed at the Theatre in Boston. First American edition. Boston, Thomas Hall, 1796." The musical play had been performed in Baltimore. Bickerstaff was the author of the book.

### OPERAS THAT WERE WRITTEN IN AMERICA.

The most interesting records in the catalogue for the champions of American opera are those giving information about the works which were written and composed in this country. This list is not long and might be extended by appeal to private sources, but we are here con-

signed to the Library's catalogue. Here is the title page of what Mr. Sonneck calls the first American opera: "The Disappointment; or, the Force of Credulity." A new American comic opera, of two acts. By Andrew Barton, Esq., New York, printed in the year 1767. Of this opera Mr. Sonneck says:

This first American ballad opera (with eighteen airs indicated by title "Air IV Yankee Doodle") was to have been first performed by the American Company at Philadelphia on April 20, 1767, but it was withdrawn, "personal reflections" rendering it "unfit for the stage." The "Disappointment" is sometimes attributed to Thomas Forrest or to John Leacock, but the evidence is not sound.

Mr. Sonneck also makes room in the catalogue for four lines from the epilogue and an extract from the preface as follows:

"Th' distant far, from fam'd Britannia's isle,  
Where comic scenes call cynics forth to smile;  
Our thrice-muse hath made her first essay  
To instruct and please you with a modern play."

The following local piece entitled "The Disappointment, or the Force of Credulity" was originally written for my own and the amusement of a few particular friends, who (unknown to me) were pleased to signify their approbation of it, in such a manner that it soon engrossed the chief part of the conversation on the following suppers. First, the desire to hear it and have it published. Under these circumstances, I was greatly at a loss how to proceed. I did not choose (as I saw no merit in it) to expose it to the criticism of critics, to put it in the power of gentlemen in scholastic knowledge to ridicule my ignorance, or to concede to the entreaties of those who I thought had no more sense than myself, and who might (perhaps) have made it better than it really is. Conscious of my own inability I determined to excuse myself to all, and in this determination I persisted for some time, but at last for my own safety was obliged to capitulate and surrender (perhaps) have made it better than it really is. Conscious of my own inability I determined to excuse myself to all, and in this determination I persisted for some time, but at last for my own safety was obliged to capitulate and surrender

A special gala performance will be given on Tuesday evening, the programme being: "La Traviata" (Act I), with Mmes. Hempel and Mr. Cristalli, Mr. Polacco conducting; "Madama Butterfly" (Act II), with Miss Farrar, Mmes. Fornia and Mr. Scotti, Mr. Toscanini conducting; "Lohengrin" (Act I), with Mmes. Gadske and Homer and Messrs. Jern, Well, Witherspoon and Schlegel, Mr. Hertz conducting; "La Boheme" (Act I), with Mmes. Alda and Messrs. Caruso, Gilly, De Segurula, Pini-Corsi and Anania, Mr. Polacco conducting.

The other operas of the week will be: "Tannhäuser," on Wednesday evening (last time this season), with Mmes. Gadske, Fremstad and Sparkes and

a German piece called "Erasmus." The dedication reads:

"To His Excellency Thomas Mifflin, Esq., President of the State of Pennsylvania; and to the Honorable Thomas McKean, Chief Justice of the said State; this comic opera approved of by them in their official capacity according to law; but withdrawn from the managers of the theatre, after it had remained in their hands more than four months, is . . . inscribed." Evidently authors and managers had the same troubles 125 years ago as now.

A woman also shows up among these pioneer American librettists, one who, if she were alive now, would in great likelihood be found among the suffragists, for she writes a political opera: "Slaves in Algiers; or, A Struggle for Freedom. A play, interspersed with songs, in three acts, by Mrs. Rowson. As performed at the New Theatres, in Philadelphia and Baltimore. Philadelphia, Printed for the Author, 1794." This appears not to have been an opera strictly speaking, but, as been an opera strictly speaking, it was first performed in Philadelphia at the New Theatre, December 22, 1794.

The music was composed by Alexander Reinagle, one of a number of English musicians who were extremely influential in New York and Philadelphia in the last years of the eighteenth and the first of the nineteenth centuries. He came of a family of musicians, and his nephew, Alexander Robert Reinagle, composed the psalm-tune known in the hymnals as "St. Peter's."

Finally we reach "Darby's Return. A comic sketch, as performed at the Theatre in this City, with universal applause." This opera was written in 1783 by William Dunlap and brought forward on November 24, 1783.

## A FORTNIGHT MORE AT METROPOLITAN

Special Gala Performance Tuesday Evening to Include Acts from Four Operas.

"Hänsel and Gretel" and "Pagliacci" will open the last week but one of the Metropolitan opera season to-morrow night. The former opera will be sung by Mmes. Mattfeld, Alten, Homer, Cox and Braslau and Mr. Goritz, Mr. Hertz conducting, and the latter opera by Miss Bori and Messrs. Caruso, Amato, Reschiglian and Bada, Mr. Polacco conducting. A special gala performance will be given on Tuesday evening, the programme being: "La Traviata" (Act I), with Mmes. Hempel and Mr. Cristalli, Mr. Polacco conducting; "Madama Butterfly" (Act II), with Miss Farrar, Mmes. Fornia and Mr. Scotti, Mr. Toscanini conducting; "Lohengrin" (Act I), with Mmes. Gadske and Homer and Messrs. Jern, Well, Witherspoon and Schlegel, Mr. Hertz conducting; "La Boheme" (Act I), with Mmes. Alda and Messrs. Caruso, Gilly, De Segurula, Pini-Corsi and Anania, Mr. Polacco conducting.

Messrs. Berger first time in the title role, Well, Althouse, Witherspoon and

Russdale, Mr. Hertz conducting. "Aida," on Thursday evening, with Mmes. Destinn, Ober and Sparkes and Messrs. Caruso, Gilly, Rothier, Rossi and Bada, Mr. Toscanini conducting.

"L'Amore Medico" and "Il Segreto di Suzanna," on Friday evening (last time this season), the former opera sung by Miss Bori, Mmes. Alten and Messrs. Cristalli, Pini-Corsi, Rothier, De Segurula, Leonhardt, Bada and Anania, Mr. Toscanini conducting; the latter with Mmes. Alda and Messrs. Scotti and Bada, Mr. Polacco conducting.

"Königskinder," on Saturday afternoon (last time this season), with Miss Farrar, Mmes. Fornia, Mattfeld and Robinson and Messrs. Jern, Goritz, Reiss, Russdale and Leonhardt, Mr. Hertz conducting.

"The Magic Flute," at popular prices, on Saturday evening (last time this season), with Mmes. Destinn, Hempel and Alten and Messrs. Berger (first time here as Tamino), Reiss, Leonhardt (first time here as Papageno), Witherspoon and Siegel, Mr. Morgenstern conducting.

Mischa Elman, the Russian violinist, will play at to-night's opera concert. Tschalkowsky's concerto in D major, with orchestra, and several morceaux by Cottenet and Wieniawski. Several artists of the company will sing, and the orchestra will play under the direction of Adolf Rothmeyer.

## "NATOMA" TO END CENTURY'S SEASON

Last of Thirty-one Weeks of Opera in English To Be Devoted to Herbert's Work.

The Century Opera Company ends its first season with the coming week's performances of Victor Herbert's "Natoma." The season, which was to have consisted of thirty-five weeks, has been shortened to thirty-one in order, it is announced, to afford sufficient time for the alterations which are to be made in the opera house. These alterations are being made for the purpose of adding a thousand seats to the present capacity of the building. The architects and contractors, after presenting the plans for the alterations, found it necessary to begin work at once in order to insure positively the opening of the second season of the Century Opera Company, which has been announced for September 14.

The opening performance of "Natoma" will be to-morrow night, instead of the customary Tuesday. There will be eight performances of the opera, including the popular Wednesday and Saturday matinees, with the last performance on Saturday night.

Those who will sing in the opening performance will be Helen Stanley as Natoma and Orville Harrold as Lieutenant Paul Merrill. Thomas Chalmers will be the Alvarado, Gilbert Wilson the Don Francisco and Alfred Kaufman the Father Peralta. The José Castro will be sung by Frank Preisch, who created this role when it was first sung by the Chicago Philadelphia Opera Company. Lois Ewell

Walter Wheatley and Jean Thelof will be the alternating artists. Others in the cast will be Samuel Adams, Louis D'Angelo, Giuseppe Interrante and Florence Coughlan. Mme. Rauch will lead in the festival dances. Mr. Scendrei will conduct and the production is under the direction of Luigi Albertelli.

The concert to-night offers a number of popular arias from "Il Trovatore" and "Faust."

Lois Ewell, Kathleen Howard, Henry Taylor and Louis D'Angelo will sing the tower and prison scenes from "Il Trovatore." The garden scene from "Faust" will be given with Beatrice La Palme as Marguerite, Walter Wheatley as Faust, Kathleen Howard as Siebel, Alfred Kaufman as Mephistopheles and Louise Hansmann as Martha. Louis Kreidler will be heard in the prologue from "Il Pagliacci," while Miss La Palme will sing the "Bird Song" and Morgan Kingston will give the "Ridi, Pagliaccio" aria from the same opera.

The orchestra will open the evening's entertainment with the overture from "Dinorah." The bacchanale from "Samson and Delilah," the first and second intermezzi from "The Jewels of the Madonna" and the dance of the hours from "La Gioconda" will be other numbers played by the orchestra. MM. Nicotia and Pasternack will conduct with Mr. Collins at the piano.

## SOME INTERESTING CONCERTS ON LIST

Miss Cheatham and Mr. Hofmann Are Among Those Booked for Recitals This Week.

Miss Kitty Cheatham's annual Easter recital will take place at the Lyceum Theatre to-morrow afternoon. This will be Miss Cheatham's last recital this season, before sailing for European engagements. Sweden contributes an old saga; Mozart, Schumann and Hans Herman chronologically represent Germany, and Moussorgsky's children's songs show that Russian is an interesting light. An eighteenth century minuet and a group of children's songs of old France will be accompanied on the harp by Charles Salgado. Excerpts from Kipling's "Just So Stories" (music by Edward German) and one of Fiona Macleod's short legends represent Great Britain. The second part of the programme will be devoted entirely to the old negro songs and stories. Songs by Ethelbert Nevin, Mary Livingston Chase and John Alden Carpenter, with traditional nursery rhymes, are the other American contributions.

On Tuesday evening Miss Marie Altona, a young soprano, will give a recital in Aeolian Hall. She will sing songs by Pergolesi, Bach, Gluck, Schumann, Pasch, Backer-Gröndahl, Järnefelt, Baxi, Puccini, Rentschitsky, Engelhardt, Ryss and Clough-Leigher.

A recital of far more than ordinary interest will occur in Carnegie Hall on Friday afternoon, when Josef Hofmann and Mischa Elman will appear together, playing jointly the César Franck Sonata in A major and the Beethoven "Kreutzer Sonata." Mr. Hofmann will also play a Liszt group and Mr. Elman a number of short selections. This occasion will mark the season's farewell of these two artists.

The fourth and last private concert of the Manuscript Society of New York will take place at the National Arts Club, Gramercy Park, on the same evening. Of special interest will be the first public performance of piano works by the blind composers, John S. Van Cleave and William F. Fuhrmeister. Catherine Conway, soprano, and Mrs. Harold Eaton Rieker, contralto, will sing four songs by Wallingford Riegler; a string quartet movement by Rieker will be performed by Messrs. Kaufman, Kilenyi and Rieker; two violin pieces by John Adam Hugo will be played by Roland Edvard Meyer, and a "Sonata Finlandia" for "cello, by G. O. Hornberger, will be performed by the composer, with Henry Kock-Deck at the piano.

It is expected that one of the largest concerts to take place in Carnegie Hall this season will be that for the benefit of the German Sailors' Home, Hoboken, N. J. This concert will take place on Saturday evening. The Arion and Liederkrans societies have given their services, and Mme. Julia Culp will be the soloist.

This concert, while under the patronage of such well known Germans as the ambassador, the consul general and others, is in charge of the Rev. Hermann Bruchner, pastor of the German Seamen's Church. The Arion Society will be under the direction of Richard Trunk, while Arthur Claassen will conduct the Liederkrans.

## The Cincinnati Festival.

The official announcement of the twenty-first biennial festival of the Cincinnati May Musical Festival Association brings intelligence that the meeting will be held in the Music Hall of that city on May 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. The conductor of the festival will be Dr. Ernst Kunwald, who has won great popularity by his direction of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra during the last year. For the first time in the history of the festival this body will perform all the instrumental music. The solo singers will be Alma Gluck and Florence Hinkle, sopranos; Schumann-Helk and Mar-

Continued on page 2.